

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A network bridge, in particular for coupling IEEE 1394 buses, containing:  
means (BGF) for monitoring the contents and/or volume of incoming and/or outgoing data that are flowing through the network bridge or its memory (F),  
the means (BGF) for monitoring the contents and/or volume being designed so as to be configurable and/or controllable by a higher-level instance (BMC), or being predefined.
2. The network bridge as recited in Claim 1  
wherein the higher-level instance (BMC) is a management and/or configuration layer for the network bridge.
3. The network bridge as recited in Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein the means (BGF) for monitoring the contents and/or volume encompass a software component within the network bridge architecture, which component has a gateway functionality and/or firewall functionality.
4. The network bridge as recited in one of Claims 1 to 3,  
wherein the extent of the data analysis by the means (BGF) for monitoring the contents and/or volume is scaleable.
5. The network bridge as recited in one of Claims 1 to 4,  
wherein the means (BGF) for monitoring the contents and/or volume are configured in such a way that in addition to an analysis of the data, a manipulation of the data is possible as well.
6. The network bridge as recited in one of Claims 1 through 5,  
wherein the analysis of the data, and optionally their manipulation, is performable in various layers of a layer model, in particular the OSI reference model.
7. The network bridge as recited in one of Claims 1 to 6,  
wherein the means (BGF) for monitoring the contents and/or volume are configured to block or prioritize address interfaces, input interfaces, and output interfaces, and/or logged data, on the basis of the evaluation.

8. A system comprising multiple network bridges as recited in one of Claims 1 to 7, -

wherein the means (BGF) for monitoring the contents and/or volume are individually configurable in each network bridge in order to allow each network bridge, independently of the other(s), to be capable of performing one or more or no functions of a gateway or a firewall.